

Clinical : Women's Health and Child Protection
Proactive release: 21 August 2019



14 August 2019

[Redacted]

E-mail: [Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

Official Information Act (1982) Request

I write in response to your Official Information Act request, dated 29 July 2019. You requested the following information:

I understand that following a 'child uplift' that the DHB's Child Protection and Midwifery teams debrief and, where appropriate, provide feedback to Oranga Tamariki.

- **Can I request any feedback given to Oranga Tamariki regarding child uplifts in the last 12 months?**

Information related to feedback and debriefs on individual cases, and discussions noted between CM Health and Oranga Tamariki – Ministry of Children that relate directly to these cases are withheld – we do this under S(9)(2)(a) of the Act – to protect the privacy of natural persons. These details may only be noted in individual clinical records, and have very high privacy interests for those involved. Reviewing these files, and providing any information in a way that also protects the privacy of the multiple individual's involved (including CM Health and Oranga Tamariki staff, mothers and babies), would take substantial collation by a clinical team, focussed on providing child protection services and would likely render the information largely meaningless.

We are however mindful of the current high levels of media attention related to maternity services, child protection services, and families and children under care of Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children.

Therefore, we note the following additional information on this topic. This reflects a summary of recent interactions with Oranga Tamariki and other agencies. CM Health and other state sector agencies routinely meet and work collaboratively to ensure the safety of staff, children and their families impacted by these procedures.

Every DHB's policy and procedures on this matter are nationally approved to ensure consistency, best practice, and compliance with statutory requirements. Our guidelines give us the opportunity to further define the local processes, and address cultural responsiveness for our diverse community. Education on Child Protection processes and procedures is mandatory for all new CM Health staff in

Kidz First, Emergency Department, Women's Health and Community Mental Health. Debriefing for our staff is based on individuals' needs for support and pastoral care. This can take the form of discussion sessions with a line manager or professional leader, or referral for confidential employee assistance programme support.

Joint education and debrief sessions with Oranga Tamariki also support clinical staff and statutory agency Social Workers to better understand all of the roles and responsibilities for those involved, and to enable them to collaboratively agree on priorities, precedence and implementation of overall processes and individual safety plans.

By way of specific examples, our teams note that we regularly work with Oranga Tamariki to incorporate best practice health initiatives and guidelines into the practice requests from other agencies. Feedback is via a range of CM Health staff, including social workers, Child Protection Team, or Oranga Tamariki liaison staff.

There is feedback provided to ensure that all processes comply with the statutory requirements, and to enable clinical staff to provide effective maternity and child health care services within these requirements. This helps ensure that for all individuals involved, the safety of mothers and babies/ children is at the forefront of processes. These agreements include ensuring any documents (birth plans, custody orders etc.) are always agreed, complete and available prior to a birth. In addition, the mother and baby Safety Plans now acknowledge the importance of clinical best-practice such as ensuring that there is immediate 'skin-to-skin' contact for new-borns, and recognise the importance of breastfeeding for mothers and babies.

All Social Workers are also aware that in cases where the courts have yet to issue a custody order, CM Health cannot delay a discharge from hospital/ birthing units, if both mother and baby are medically fit for discharge. CM Health does share information with Oranga Tamariki as per procedures, related to discharge planning, and community addresses.

These agreements are now reflected in our procedure documents and guidance for CM Health staff.

I trust this information satisfactorily answers your query. If you are not satisfied with this response you are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau DHB website.

Yours sincerely,



Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health